

Community Preservation Act Committee (CPAC)
Meeting Minutes
Thursday, December 15, 2011

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 pm by Peter Jessop, Chair, in the Town Room at Town Hall.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Marilyn Blaustein, Paris Boice, Lynda Faye, Michael Jacques, Peter Jessop, Chair; Ellen Kosmer, Mary Streeter, Vice Chair, Stan Ziomek

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT: Sandra Anderson

STAFF / OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: Diana Stein, Select Board liaison, Lisa Berry, Little Red Schoolhouse Preservation Committee, members of the public

AGENDA

- Review and Discuss Proposals
- Discuss how we publicize CPA events in the future
- Discuss effectiveness of the revised Proposal Letter
- Approve any minutes
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DISCUSSION

Review and discuss proposals –

Little Red Schoolhouse \$130,000. Lisa Berry, a parent, presented the proposal for Little Red Schoolhouse Preservation Committee. The group is hoping to preserve the building and program. The program cannot continue in its existing space at Amherst College because of construction of a new science center. There are reports that the building will be destroyed, however Amherst College is not responding to questions. The proposal is contingent on Amherst College giving the building to the families and/or town. A meeting has been scheduled with the Amherst College treasurer at which point more information will be available. The Historical Commission agreed that the building is historically significant and wrote a letter in support of not demolishing the building. It has not yet been prioritized among other proposals forwarded by the Commission to CPAC. There are still a lot of details to be worked out, including working with landowners in the area to identify a site to house the building. CPAC also raised other questions such as plans for fund raising from other sources, willingness to place a historic preservation restriction on the building, and source of funds for future cost of operating the school. According to Berry, there is presently income of \$20,000 annually from an endowment of \$400,000. It was unclear if these funds would continue to be available. Jessop explained that if the project is not feasible or complete in its proposal, CPAC will not make a recommendation to Town Meeting. A commitment from Amherst College and identification of a proposed site are desirable.

Fence for Dickinson Family Plot. The Historical Commission is requesting \$40,000 to restore the fence surrounding the Dickinson Family plot. \$21,000 to restore the fence was previously allocated; however the fence needs to be cast in more than one piece and is a far more complicated process than originally anticipated. The Commission is requesting an additional \$40,000 to complete the process. The disrepair is a result of vandalism and lack of maintenance. Streeter asked if this would be a candidate for outside fundraising. Jessop asked if the RFP was to restore the fence to its original condition. Additionally, he would like to know what's been spent and wants a more precise estimate of the costs, including an explanation of how costs have escalated from \$21,000 to \$61,000, and better timeline. Faye reported that the estimate assumed that the fence would be cast as one piece. Diana Stein asked if private funding were available for the Emily Dickinson house and whether other options have been explored. She suggested that it would be good if CPA funds could leverage other money which would strengthen the proposal. Historical Commission working to get proposals that were previously funded with CPA funds to be completed. Streeter suggested that some of the funds previously unspent for other Historical Preservation activities may be allocated to this project.

Conservation Commission \$400,000. Jessop explained that this proposal is a place holder and presently not a viable one. \$25,000 for appraisals and surveys is fairly standard for the Conservation Commission.

Many projects are often matched with state funds. The Commission needs to bring a real piece of property to CPAC in order for the proposal to be considered.

Pioneer Valley Habitat for Humanity \$20,000. Jessop disclosed that he is on the board of Habitat. Doug Kohl donated the land in question about 3 years ago, and part of the site has become wetlands and is a more difficult site to build on resulting in additional site costs. It has not yet been determined if this is a buildable site. If it's not a buildable lot, the request will be withdrawn. Habitat is working with the Conservation Commission and will provide more information as it becomes available. More complete information is needed in order for the project to move along.

HAP Housing \$250,000 for Olympia Oaks Project. HAP is intending to build 42 new units with a complicated funding package. \$650,000 of almost \$11 million in total development costs will be debt on the project. Will request be for less than \$250,000? Will we be asked for more money after this?

Mary Streeter suggested that questions be emailed to Peter ahead of time so that presenters could answer them.

Amherst Historical Society \$49,000. The Historical Society is requesting \$49,000, \$20,000 for roof repairs and \$22,000 to create an electronic database of the objects in its collections.

Jones Library. The library is not requesting any money but would like to present on what they've done with the money they have already received.

Historic Preservation. Hampshire Council of Governments \$239,000. Renovation of Hampshire County Courthouse. Jessop acknowledged that the building is a historical structure, but not located in the Town of Amherst and that the Town of Amherst is not a member of the Hampshire Council of Governments. The Historical Commission also determined it was an issue of deferred maintenance and did not recommend. Jessop will contact Todd Ford and advise him of the recommendation.

Total Requests. \$1,129,739.63 is requested with estimated funds of only \$546,365 available for new CPAC projects. Town Meeting cannot vote money for projects that are not recommended by CPAC. The process of allocation of CPAC funds and Town Meeting procedures regarding CPA funding were discussed. TM can vote a lower amount than recommended but not a higher amount.

Discuss CPA Schedule. Next meetings are January 5, 19 and February 2, with a Public Hearing on February 16 to be followed immediately with a meeting.

Discuss how we publicize CPA events in the future – Mary Streeter said that there wasn't a letter about CPA proposals in the local press and suggested that the Committee should designate someone to work on publicity. Mary volunteered to handle the website and the Town Meeting list serve.

Discuss effectiveness of the revised Proposal Letter – Jessop thought this year's letter was more effective than in the past. Streeter suggested that all documents be submitted electronically, so it becomes part of the permanent record.

Discussed scheduling of presentations. On January 5th, CPAC will look at funding and proposals and brainstorm questions. Questions should be emailed to Jessop if possible. January 19 presenters will be Recreation and Affordable Housing; Historical and Open Space will present on the February 2. The committee will make allowances if information is not yet available for the Conservation Commission.

Approve any minutes – The minutes of November 17th were reviewed.

MOTION by Stan Ziomek, 2nd by Michael Jacques, to recommend minutes of November 17 as corrected.
VOTED 8-0-1

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made to adjourn at 8:40 pm. Voted unanimously.

NEXT MEETINGS

Our next meeting will be Thursday, January 5 **at 7:00 pm in the** First Floor Meeting room, Town Hall. Our meetings are usually scheduled for the 3rd Thursday of the month from September through April 2011. Meetings are scheduled for Jan. 19, Feb. 2 and 16, and Mar 15, and Apr 19.

DOCUMENTS DISTRIBUTED

- Agenda, 1 page
- Minutes of 11/17/11, 2 pages
- CPA proposals from Little Red School House Preservation Committee, Fence for Dickinson Family Plot, Pioneer Valley Habitat for Humanity, HAP Housing for Olympia Oaks, Amherst Historical Society, Hampshire Council of Governments, Conservation Commission
- Letter from Jones Library

Respectfully submitted by Marilyn Blaustein, acting clerk

Approved January 5, 2012